



Affirmation:

United Methodists for Gay and Lesbian Concerns

February 2, 1981
Feb. 1981

Mary forced into plea

Mary Gaddis, a member of the Affirmation Co-ordinating committee, had to plead guilty to a charge of contracting without a license to get the charges dropped from a felony to a misdemeanor, on January 20, 1981. The State of California licensing bureau pushed very hard to make this case an example of strict enforcement of their licensing regulations.

Mary will soon face sentencing which possibly could result in a jail sentence and fine.

During Mary's arrest and subsequent court appearances there were numerous acts of homophobia exhibited by the local police and court system personnel. If our network of lesbian and gay folk had not been there, there is no telling what would have happened to her.

What does it mean?

"What does Affirmation mean to you?" was the question asked of members of a local Affirmation group. Their answers run from the "light and breezy" to more thought-provoking ideas. You might even see an answer similar to the one you would give.

First, Garth said, "Affirmation is a non-threatening social group as well as being a place where Christians can get together and worship with each other. It's a place

Mary's legal costs incurred during the problem have been extremely difficult to cope with and donations to the Mary Gaddis Defense Fund should be sent to Affirmation: [redacted], Evanston, IL [redacted] as soon as possible.

Editorial Called to love/action

The following news item should give each of us something to ponder.....

"The Northern Illinois MFSA (Methodists for Social Action) newsletter recently listed some of their 'action items.'

'--major study emphasis on the elimination of racism; a re-affirmation of Joan Clark as deaconess, support of the upcoming Affirmation educational conference on homophobia...'"

Both Affirmation & MFSA people across the country are actively "doing theology." The grass roots work is where we can make a visible difference. Affirmation has a national image but it is only as strong as each local voice is heard and felt -- there are brothers and sisters all over the country putting themselves on the line everyday. We must not hope other people will fight for our rights and those rights will just be handed to us. We have to take responsibility for our lives; yet, continue to take courage from knowing that the network of Affirmation puts us together.

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Groups develop new programs

Affirmation:Mid-Atlantic in co-operation with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches-Washington Field Office is proposing a NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY, a day when Lesbian and Gay Christians would put cards printed with pink triangles in the offering plates of their churches and synagogues.

The last Sunday of June is the suggested day for the card day. Each card would have an explanation of what the triangle stands for on the back. Just the presence of several pink triangles in each offering plate could have an impact in the religious community all over the country.

California-Nevada Conference Council on Ministries elected twelve members to the homophobia task force. Names were submitted by Affirmation:Bay Area and the Council on Ministries.

The 3-year program will examine available models of study and action and develop a position and program on the intentional inclusion or expulsion of homosexual people in the organized church.

The program was approved by the Annual Conference. The petition was presented by the Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the Executive Board of the United

Methodist Women. Members of Affirmation:Bay Area worked with both groups.

Affirmation:Chicago held a 1-day retreat to discuss goals and projects for the local group. Affirmation will meet twice a month [one meeting will be strictly a social gathering and the second will be worship-oriented] Attendance at the Affirmation meetings is running between 16 and 20 at every meeting.

The Constitution was also re-written to specifically encourage gender parity.

"Human Sexuality: Myths, Reality, and Faith" is the subject of a six-session seminar being sponsored in Jan. and Feb. by Affirmation:Mid-Atlantic and Dumbarton UMC to develop a better understanding of human sexuality and Christian faith.

Successive Monday night meetings will focus on:

- Biblical and Theological Perspectives;
- Sociological Perspectives;
- Biological & Psycho-Sexual Perspectives;
- Sexuality: Myths & Stereotypes;
- Sexuality as God's gift, A Service of Worship and Celebration.

Yes, We receive letters...

Sometimes we all must wonder what kind of questions arrive at the national mailing address in Evanston, IL. Just how effective is the publicity about Affirmation and what do people know about us and what we stand for? What should that tell us about the tasks we have before us?

Well, we receive dues payments, regular monthly contributions [often with wonderful messages and greetings included] and some junk mail but sometimes a letter arrives that makes all of our efforts worthwhile.

Members of the co-ordinating committee take turns responding to many of these letters but we thought you'd be interested in some excerpts from a few of the recent letters and cards.

"..it has been the season to reveal my gayness to my parents. And it was good: they are seeking to understand. I am writing to see if Affirmation has a bibliography which would be helpful to parents on their way to acceptance."

--Upper Midwest

"This year I asked my parents to give... money gifts...to Affirmation, instead of giving me gifts worth that much."

--Midwest

"...our 19 year old son who is at the University told us that he was a homosexual and never intends to 'pretend' again... finally, we consulted with our pastor and he suggested we get in touch with you."

--South

"...am also sending a check for \$___ to Washington Square Church."

--West

"Do you have any other members in.....

---the Pittsburgh area?

---Gainesville, Florida?

---Ann Arbor, Michigan?

---Santa Clara, California?

---North Carolina?

"In past weeks I have been in touch with several organizations connected with the work of ministry within the gay community. Being a United Methodist pastor..."

--Upper Midwest

"Also I am interested in being a resource person for the educational event."

--East

"Your letter and the information you sent to us on Affirmation was beautiful and has given us courage to try-try-try. Thank you."

--South

"...do you know a really good one (counselor) in our part of the country? We prefer one who understands being gay."

--South

"I'm a minister and wondered if I can get in touch with other people in my area to get a support group going?"

--Northeast

"Please send me some information about United Methodists for gay concerns."

--Northeast

"Wanted to ask you about the possibility of having some time for couples either prior to or during the next Affirmation meeting."

--East

I'm giving this form to a friend

Nashville meet set

Join us in Nashville this spring. Affirmation will meet March 13, 14, 15, 1981 in Nashville, TN to share ideas, plan strategy, and do the work of Affirmation. Several workshops are planned and both the women and men are planning caucuses.

Friday night will be collecting ourselves and renewing friendships; we're working on special plans for that night, too.

Saturday will be work-sessions in the a.m. and committees and workshops in the p.m.

Sunday is planned as business/fellowship time. More details are being worked out and if you want to see particular subjects covered please let us know.

There is a \$15.00 registration fee to help pay for the facilities where we will meet and other meeting expenses. (It is the understanding that this fee is not meant to exclude anyone; if there is a need to lift the expense, please make that a note.

Please fill out the pre-registration form below and mail it to: Affirmation, [REDACTED], Evanston, IL [REDACTED], by March 1, 1981. We hope you'll be able to come.

Related to the spring meeting of Affirmation, the co-ordinating committee asked Leeanne T. from Nashville to serve as an

Records audited

Affirmation's financial records were audited on January 14, 1981, by George B., the treasurer of Affirmation:Chicago; the books balance, agree with bank statements, and all expenditures were verified.

The auditor reminded Affirmation that any expenses submitted should be on vouchers.

Signed

George B.

Ed. Event discussed

The Educational Event planned for this spring for church leaders about homophobia will be discussed at the March meeting in Nashville. There have been several problems setting up the conference and soliciting support for the event from a variety of sources. At this point, it looks like the conference will not take place this spring as planned. However, during the Nashville meeting we will endeavour to re-schedule the event in the fall. The additional time should allow for more input from Affirmation members and resource people and make it easier for the invitees to come up with the registration fees.

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